

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

Sheridan Electric Cooperative - Medicine Lake, Mont. 406-789-2231

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A dove on a wire

BY RICK KNICK, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

When I got home from work one day, I headed to the back closet to hang up my coat. When I walked by the living room window, I noticed a dove on the wire on the east side of the house. This was not unusual, as it is a popular resting place for birds. This is a zip line wire I put up for my grandkids, so it is about chest high. On my way back to the bedroom to change clothes, I noticed the dove was still sitting there.

Once changed, I headed to the back of the house again, with the intentions of fertilizing the grass. I noticed again the dove sitting in the same place. I retrieved the spreader from the garden shed, filled it with fertilizer and proceeded to spread on the west side of the house and then on the north side.

When I turned the corner to do the east side, I noticed the dove was still there. Keep in mind that I had refilled the spreader at least twice, so the time span was about 20 minutes. I remember thinking, "That's kind of a long time for a dove to be in one place."

I made the first pass and got within about 10 feet of the bird. On

the second pass, I got within about 3 feet before it took flight. It actually startled me because doves are normally more cautious and would have left when seeing me come around the corner.

A few more steps and I realized why it had been so distracted that it hadn't noticed me. There on the step to the east door of the garage lay another dove. It appeared that it had inadvertently flown into the window of the door and fell to the concrete. It occurred to me that the dove on the wire was grieving and hadn't noticed me until I was right on top of him.

One month before, my mother-in-law had passed away. Since that time, my father-in-law has been a little more difficult to visit with and a little less responsive than normal. His replies are a few seconds slower when asked a question and he is a little indecisive when making everyday decisions. Are these the same symptoms the dove had?

It seems the only time there is happiness in his eyes is when the great-grandsons are at his feet. I wondered if the dove has a family that it recognizes?

The family has talked about my

father-in-law being able to stay home alone this coming winter. He can take care of himself by doing the everyday things, except that we worry about him cooking. Of course, my mother-in-law was the chief cook and I doubt there has been more than a few days in the 61 years of marriage that they didn't eat together. I wondered how long the dove had been with its mate.

I personally wanted to see him stay at home for as long as possible, but lately I've had second thoughts. I don't think we are worrying about the right things (cooking, getting medications right, showering). I think the most difficult thing about his well-being is the loneliness. Perhaps being in a facility with others in the same situation would help with that. How does the dove deal with loneliness? Does it find another mate, join a flock for companionship or go someplace to be alone and just accept the end of life?

Dealing with the loss of a loved one is difficult at best. Strange thoughts enter your mind and you wonder what you could have done differently. There are many ways to deal with these feelings, but it is still painful. Even Mother Nature hasn't developed a perfect way to cope, as was evident with the dove. ■

The embodiment of a cooperative employee, Ryan Hall

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

As I sit behind my desk and look over at an employee of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA), I wonder where his career will take him and at what levels he will achieve.

Ryan Hall is an employee of this establishment located in Great Falls, Mont. He is the editor of the *Rural Montana* magazine which is published every month for you, the membership. He is very good at his job, and travels all through the state, touching base with the members and asking the one big question that we ask of you periodically, "How can we do our jobs better for you?"

His demeanor is calm, and he is dressed professionally. He is looking for any opportunity to assist this cooperative, its member, with anything it may ask of him. He is looking for any opportunity to enhance a program, provide a solution or bring an idea that another cooperative used to solve a problem. He is also studying this cooperative to find anything that we may be doing that could help another co-op.

He is doing his job, and does it well.

But I go deeper. I quickly learn that Ryan has a trait that is a part of almost all co-op employees across the state. He has a trait of volunteerism. He is a part of the community in which he lives, donating time where he can and still being a father and husband to his wonderful family.

But wait, I find out that the

story goes deeper than that of his community volunteerism. He is also a teacher and donates a week of his vacation time to go and teach in Oklahoma.

This adventure has been an annual event for several years now. Donating his time, he travels to the University of Oklahoma, where he has taught two different journalism programs – one to incoming college students and one to high school teachers who then teach their students about journalism. The Oklahoma Institute for Diversity in Journalism, which Ryan has taught once, helps diverse students enter college prepared for the journalism program. In the Oklahoma Scholastic Media Institute, which Ryan has taught twice, he teaches high school journalism teachers how to teach new and evolving techniques to students. Targeting rural students and teachers, this process levels the playing field when the students reach college age and are competing for jobs with urban students.

Ryan says that by teaching teachers to teach this topic, we will see both rural and minority students achieve the desires they have in this field, and give them a "leg up" when none existed before.

When asked how Ryan feels about this process, he states, "It is cool to see the teachers become excited to have someone come and teach them to teach this field to young folks."

Co-ops are notorious for hiring people with the volunteer trait. All across the state, we have school board members, city council



members, extensive board members for community functions, coaches and the list goes on. Ryan is no different. He has identified this area to teach his expertise to folks who are in need of the training. By donating a week of his vacation to teach in a vital field for the future, he also takes the opportunity to expose potential journalists to other forms of journalism, much like your *Rural Montana* magazine.

Ryan is a model employee for the cooperative world. He is a young leader with high potential for the future. Ryan lives and breathes cooperatives and he is a great friend.

Well-done, Ryan, for all you do for our rural cooperatives across the state and beyond. ■



Are you planning for the future?

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

Are you planning for the future? This is a question all of us ask ourselves, especially when we come closer to retirement.

Planning is something that everyone should do. It's easy to live for the day and not think about tomorrow, but if you do not plan, you could be stuck in an almost no-win situation.

I am one who thrives in the work day. I love to work and stay busy for the membership and do not look forward for that day of retirement. To not be working is something that I cannot even consider.

Planning for the day when you say, "I am ready and want to do something else," is a common theme. Rick Knick is one of these folks who has stated to me that with retirement looming, he wants to do something

different and work with his hands.

This could be said about anyone, but there are those who want to find that warm sunny beach and relax in their retirement.

It is the folks who do not plan, and live for the day, that this message is for. There will come a day when all of the days ahead are shorter than the days behind. This is a time when you wake up and say to yourself, "I should have put something away for retirement instead of focusing entirely on hunting, fishing or racing."

Now, you could say that to not live life while you are young is just as bad, and I would have to agree. Some folks will actually change jobs to meet the needs of fun. Personally, the career has always been at the top of my list right next to family.

Yes, these are two different thought processes and both technically right.

My family and I have given a lot up for the career. We have moved where the job has taken us, and always with the same company. We have settled and made a life and given up hometowns, backyard hunting and established ourselves into other cultures. We have built a life and have always thought about the day we do retire, thus planning for that day.

So, from a one-sided point of view, plan for that day. Save in any program that your employer may have, and find other programs that do the same. Young or middle-aged, plan for that day. ■

Lighting to be given away



In the spirit of efficiency, Sheridan Electric Cooperative is giving away light-emitting diodes (LEDs) each month. Each month's winner will receive 12 new LED bulbs.

So this month, take a moment to complete and mail the coupon. Maybe you'll be this month's lucky winner and save on your energy costs. Good luck. ■

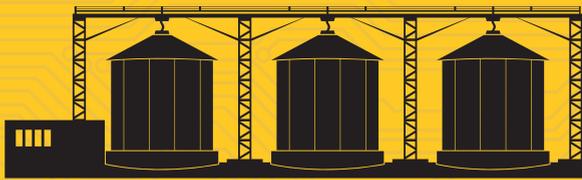
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Account number: _____

*Congratulations to **Geraldine Glover** for winning this month's light bulb giveaway.*



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	October 2018	October 2019
Total miles of line	2,836	2,835
Consumers billed	3,081	3,141
Kilowatt-hours purchased	11,385,530	12,725,727
Kilowatt-hours sold	10,940,554	11,965,734
Average KWH per residential consumer	1,118	1,296
Average bill per residential consumer	\$109	\$123
Cost of purchased power	\$596,680	\$758,931
Margins year to date	\$3,179,853	\$3,549,280

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	October 2018	October 2019
Weather	8	7
Age or deterioration	3	3
Animals and public	4	2
Power supplier	0	0
Equipment	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	October 2018	October 2019	Year to date
Pole installations	90	1	56
New construction	2,884 ft.	415 ft.	48,684 ft.
Miles driven	24,328	27,229	221,206
New accounts	2	4	42
Accounts retired	1	0	18

SHERIDAN ELECTRIC CO-OP

Medicine Lake, Mont. 59247
406-789-2231

TRUSTEES

Rod Smith, President Dagmar, Mont.
 Rick A. Hansen, V. President Froid, Mont.
 Rob Rust, Sec. Alkabo, N.D.
 Kerrey Heppner, Treas. Plentywood, Mont.
 Alan Danelson, Trustee Scobey, Mont.
 Andrew Dethman, Trustee Brockton, Mont.
 Harlan Skillingberg, Trustee Plentywood, Mont.
 Jody Lagerquist, Trustee Westby, Mont.
 Sherl Shanks, Trustee Brockton, Mont.

EMPLOYEES

Rick Knick Manager
 Riley Tommerup Office Mgr./Accountant
 Scott Westlund Marketing/Member Service Manager
 Jamie Ator Accountant
 Lisa Salvevold Office Assistant
 Tasha Roness Customer Service Representative
 Torie Waller Work Order Clerk
 Kory Opp Line Superintendent
 Bryan Lenz Line Foreman
 Nick Oelkers Staking Tech
 Tim Ereth Operator/Utilityman
 Josh Johnson Electrical General Foreman
 Tom Hinds Electrical Foreman
 Steve Augustine Line Sub Foreman
 Dan Roeder Journeyman Lineman
 Shawn Sansaver Journeyman Lineman
 Josh Marottek Journeyman Lineman
 Josh Ming Journeyman Lineman
 Bill Baillie Apprentice Lineman
 Nolen Drury Apprentice Lineman
 Tristan Ereth Apprentice Electrician
 Rod Luft Warehouse/Utility
 Vicky Haddix Custodian

OUTAGES • CALL 24 HOURS A DAY

406-789-2231

OFFICE HOURS: 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative